

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION.—For once, the weather has progressed in more or less orderly fashion, without the extended periods of extreme



dryness or heavy rains that sometimes characterize California springs. A series of cold fronts passed through the Region in April, bringing occasional gentle rains that have done much to prolong the flowering season and the greenness of the hills. This type of rain seems to have little, if any, effect on migrating birds. The most influential factor is that of windiness. Strong head winds evidently have definite grounding effects, resulting in piling up migrants in areas where observers find them concentrated to some extent. Or, as also occurred in this season, winds may cause some birds to detour into areas of less unfavorable wind conditions. As birds begin to come into the Region from the south, they face a generally northwest route, determined by the Central Valley, and the mountain ranges that bound this valley. There may be some crossing laterally, but there seems to be insufficient evidence to pin this down in detail.

In April, there was a prolonged series of sometimes strong northwesterly winds, especially in the San Francisco Bay area and the central coast. At times, these prevailed well into the Valley as well. Some arrivals had already reached mid-California by April 2 and 3, as a result of favorable winds or windless nights to the south. In fact, April 3 was a good day to locate migrant species, as many reports pointed out. However, even though it seemed that birds were all set to keep coming in, the following spell of northwest winds, even inland, held them up. Unfortunately, owing to a lack of reporters from the southern part of our Region, we were not able to fill in this picture more accurately. But this must have been the case, for every time the winds let up, or switched to rain-bringing southerly or southeasterly directions, birds poured in, only to be again grounded as winds from the northwest strengthened within a day or two. In the Valley, when winds lessened on such days as April 5, 9, 16, 18, and 20, migrants came through and were reported. But, in the coastal and Bay vicinities, almost continual strong northwest winds, with gusts up to 50 m.p.h. prevailed until the night of April 22-23. Then, a dramatic shift in direction and intensity, there and inland, proved the days following to be the best time of all for arrivals. Everywhere, birds were in numbers, and seemingly all expected species were checked in. Warblers, and probably Vaux's Swifts, had been moving up the edge of the Great Valley, taking advantage of gentler winds there, rather than bucking terrific head winds, coastwise. The period between April 27 and May 6 was a time of orderly and regular arrival of migrants through all of the central part of the state while winds remained favorable. But on May 7, a cold front passed that again grounded birds, making it a great day for birding. It was largely coincidental in this case, that it happened on a week-end, for there were enough mid-week observations to support this. The bulk of the landbird migration was largely finished by May 9, according to the bulk of reports in the midsection of the state.

The most striking feature of the season was the flow of warblers. These birds evidently followed an inland route, so narrow at times that they could scarcely be found outside the area of concentration. The strong head winds in the coastal areas must have had a large part to do with it, for the reports of warblers from there were practically nil, except for Orange-crowned and Wilson's, and a bare mention of Yellow, and these in small numbers. In contrast,—and what a contrast!—at least 10 species of warblers passed through the wooded sections of Mount Diablo, Contra Costa County, in such numbers that a single tree would commonly contain a dozen warblers of several species! Beginning on April 3, Orange-crowned, Wilson's, Townsend's, Black-throated Gray, Hermit and Audubon's Warblers became particularly abundant as the days passed; peak numbers, depending upon species, appear between April 19 and May 7 (EAP). The observers reporting from the Sacramento Valley also were finding all the species of warblers on their check-list, but evidently not in such concentrations. Orange-crowned Warblers, pre-

ceding most species by a month in places, were considered especially abundant and were singing for an exceptionally long period of time. Perhaps the longer, cooler time before heat set in also was effective, for there was much singing on the part of all the warblers.

These birds apparently proceeded almost due north then, for Nashville, MacGillivray's, and Hermit Warblers were noted as first arrivals, and were banded, at Sacramento Wildlife National Refuge near Wil-lows, at almost precisely the same date (EK) when the species was disappearing from Mt. Diablo and environs. In the Sierra Nevada, Wilson's Warblers were noted as exceedingly abundant by late May at the 9000 to 10,000 ft. elevation (JH); but other species of birds near Yosemite stayed unseasonably late at lower levels, because of a spell of below-freezing nighttime temperatures in May (WJF). Cassin's Finches, for instance, which usually nest above Yosemite Valley, stayed all through May in the Valley, and were not paired off at the end of the month, while arrivals of Calliope Hummingbirds and Black Swifts, among the summer visitors, had been slow in "reporting in" (WJF).

To sum up, most reporters agreed that the spring migration season was slow in getting started, with numbers of individuals low until after mid-April. Then, as strong headwinds abated, migrants flowed steadily in, warblers, especially, by-passing the coastal areas to move up the western edge of the Great Valley, and perhaps the Sierra. Many winter visitors, such as Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cedar Waxwings, Hermit Thrushes, Audubon's and Myrtle Warblers, and Golden-crowned Sparrows showed a tendency to remain late.

Grebes, Shearwaters, Cormorants.—Twelve Red-necked Grebes observed at Santa Cruz on April 22, were late for such a large number (FEH, JH). Moderate numbers of Sooty Shearwaters, meaning up to 5000 or so, were seen close to the shore of Monterey Bay, April 15, 16, and 17 (EAA, GMcC, GPL). A pair of Pelagic Cormorants, and 3 pairs of Pigeon Guillemots were observed flying in and out from under old buildings at Cannery Row, Monterey, during May, and in general exhibiting such breeding behavior as to indicate to the observer the presence of nests (GPL).

Waterfowl, Birds of Prey.—An Emperor Goose was seen at close range at Pescadero Beach, San Mateo Co. on April 13 (RS). At least 250 Green-winged Teal on April 16 at Spreckel's Sugar Ponds, Woodland, were rather late in contrast to other migrant ducks, which mostly were gone by April 1 (AW). Common Scoters, continuing the trend of better than usual numbers last year, appeared even more prevalent. Several male Red-breasted Mergansers in breeding plumage were still present, April 13 and 14, at Richardson's and Bolinas Bay, Marin Co. (FP). Swainson's Hawks were almost unnoticed this spring, even in the Sacramento Valley. An Osprey was noted on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe, May 10, and at Crystal Bay, May 12 (PAW).

Shorebirds, Gulls, Pigeons, Hummingbirds.—Whimbrels seemed in the best numbers since 1955, for up to 50 could be found along one-half mile of San Francisco Beach at the peak period between April 26 and May 1 (BDC); they were noted as "very common." April 24, near Half Moon Bay (GMcC & RS). Knots continued in good supply: on April 23 at Moss Landing, 16 were present (GPL); at Bay Farm Island, next day, there were at least 200 in breeding plumage on the "loafing grounds" (GMcC & RS); and 3 were noted at Moss Landing on April 30 (HLC). A usually coastal Short-billed Dowitcher was seen at Woodland Sewer Ponds, April 30 (GMcC); and another exceedingly rare inland record was of 5 Sanderlings observed at Davis Sewer Ponds, May 14 (EAA). Meanwhile, Sanderlings reached only modest numbers even at the peak as they moved along San Francisco Beach (BDC). Seventeen Am. Avocets turned up on the Wawona golf course, Yosemite, on May 6 for the third-known record in the Park (WJF). Phalaropes of all species were very scarce. Mew Gulls, which had thinned out by April 1, were last seen at San Francisco Beach on April 29 (BDC). About 25 Sabine's Gulls were noted off Monterey, May 13, for a very nice showing during a boat trip (JWK). Band-tailed Pigeons were everywhere reported as common, but not in flocks as nesting was going on. Three Costa's Hummingbirds were noted in a canyon west of Patterson, Stanislaus Co., on May 7 for a most unusual northern record (RS & ALC).

Woodpeckers, Flycatchers.—Unreported during the winter except for a single bird at Vasona Reservoir, Los Gatos in Santa Clara Co., Lewis' Woodpeckers were noted again: one still at Vasona Reservoir on April 9 (EDS); one west of Stanford University, San Mateo Co., on April 17 (HLC); several "as usual" in Arroyo Mocho, near Livermore, on April 23 (G.G.A.S.); one in the mountains of Madera County, near North Fork, May 3 (FHW); and some in Arroyo del Valle, Alameda Co., May 14 (GM & PL). Many observers found the Western Kingbird in very good numbers, and with nesting in full swing by May.

Jays, Thrushes, Phainopeplas.—Two Gray Jays were foraging on Salmon berries, May 22, in Van Damme Beach State Park, south of Fort Bragg (EE). This is an unusually far southern record for Mendocino County. A Scrub Jay was flushed from a nest of 5 eggs, 2 ft. off the ground in Arroyo Mocho Canyon on April 2 (HL). After the pronounced lack of Varied Thrushes over-wintering, it's interesting to have a report that in a heavily-forested area east of Blue Lake, Humboldt Co., this species was abundant on May 9 (GPL)—and this area is reputed to be a sparse breeding area at that! A first arrival of Swainson's Thrushes on April 8 at Soquel (FEH), and a freshly killed one at Davis on April 10 (AW) were evidence that a few slipped in early, although the majority were not noticed until more usual dates in late April and early May; yet they were considered scarce. Six Phainopeplas on April 8 were seen 5 miles southwest of Auburn, Placer Co. (GMcC), and one was noted along Highway 198, southern Monterey County, on May 10 (VLY).

Warblers.—More specifically, Nashville Warblers reached their peak numbers, at least 6 in the Rock City area of Mt. Diablo, about April 20, but were gone by April 30, except for a May 5 straggler (EAP). And it was on April 30 at the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge that the first arrival noted was banded (EK). Yellow Warblers were nowhere numerous, but slipped through central California sparsely and steadily from about April 15 on through May 13, when one was noted at Crystal Bay, Lake Tahoe (PAW). Two Myrtle Warblers were present on April 30 at Mt. Diablo (MM), along with many Audubon's Warblers that probably reached peak numbers on April 20, disappearing by May 4 (EAP). Black-throated Gray Warblers spanned the whole two months, as they were first noted on April 3, reached a peak in numbers about April 19, and dwindled on through May 31 (EAP); they were present by May 9 at Weaverville, Trinity County (GPL). Townsend's and Hermit Warblers were among the most abundant of Mt. Diablo's migrants, reaching peak numbers about May 6. An estimate of 25 to 50 Townsend's was made on May 2 (PAW), and on other days, "trees full" was the best that could be said as they spread out and covered the vegetation all over the mountain (MM, EAP); the last lone female was noted on May 27. In the Berkeley Hills, MacGillivray's Warblers began arriving on April 15, with the bulk of them present on April 20 (MM).

Blackbirds, Orioles, Tanagers.—Yellow-headed Blackbirds, estimated at 2000 to 3000, were present at Spreckel's Sugar Ponds near Woodland on April 16 (AW). Hooded Orioles arrived about April 1 in the Los Gatos-San Jose area, Santa Clara Co., and began to seek out nest sites in fan palms almost immediately (EDS). Western Tanagers came through most areas in mid-state from May 1 through the month, with a regular wave of males at Rock City, Mt. Diablo, on May 2 and another of both sexes on May 9 (EAP).

Fringillids.—Most observers who found them at all reported Pine Siskins very scarce. A pair of Black-chinned Sparrows was observed, pursued by a male Anna's Hummingbird, near the South Gate on Mount Diablo, May 11; and subsequent song was heard from the chaparral-covered slopes below occasionally through the month and into June, indicating probable territorial residence (EAP).

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